Notre Dame Catholic Academy

Newsletter

Headteacher's message:

We have reached the end of a busy week at Notre Dame.

One of this week's highlights was the BBC Bitesize Careers Tour, which provided an inspiring insight into the diverse career opportunities available to our young people. Through a series of engaging sessions led by an experienced BBC presenter, students heard from a panel of local professionals who shared their personal career journeys. Discussions covered everything from qualifications and career pathways to work experience, resilience and the importance of developing key employability skills. The event encouraged our students to think ambitiously about their futures and helped them recognise the wealth of opportunities that exist right on their doorstep.

We were also pleased to welcome so many Year 11 students and their families to our Year 11 Success Evening. As our students begin this important GCSE year, the evening provided valuable guidance on revision, study habits and how families can support learning at home. It was particularly encouraging to hear the positive conversations taking place and to see the high levels of engagement from both students and parents.

Our Year 7 students celebrated Roald Dahl Day with a Readathon! To encourage reading for pleasure and celebrate the joy of storytelling, students took on the ambitious challenge of reading the entirety of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory in a single day. The event created a wonderful atmosphere, with students fully immersed in the story and demonstrating great enthusiasm throughout. A big thank you to the many staff volunteers who generously gave their time to read chapters aloud and help make the day such a success.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our school community.

Wishing all of our families a restful weekend!

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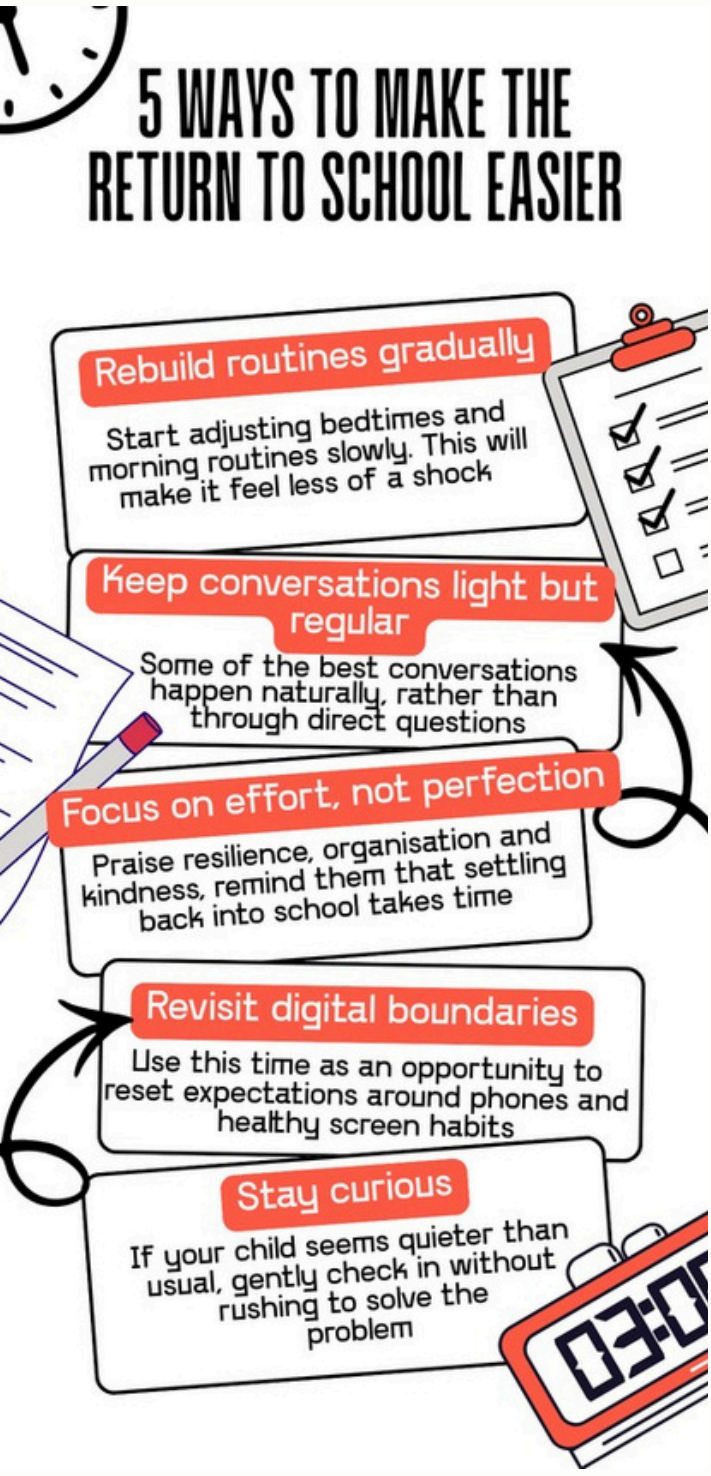
MRS TAYLOR

HEADTEACHER

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

September 2026 | Secondary | What parents and carers need to know about: Back to school | Online challenges



When might your child need extra support? It's normal for children to take time to settle back into school but if changes such as persistent low mood, withdrawal from friends, refusing to attend school, changes in sleep or appetite, frequent headaches or stomach aches or becoming unusually emotional continue for more than a couple of weeks, they may need some extra support. If you're concerned, speak our pastoral team.

Supporting your child's return to secondary school
Returning to secondary school after the summer is about much more than going back into the classroom. Young people may be adjusting to changes in friendships, new teachers, increased expectations and the social pressures that often return as group chats and social media become more active again. These worries don't always sound like 'I'm anxious.' Instead, they may show up as irritability, tiredness or reluctance to talk. Understanding that these feelings are common can help parents respond with reassurance and support.

Digital safeguarding focus
For many families, the summer holidays bring a more relaxed approach to technology. Children often spend longer on their devices, stay up later, use social media more frequently and become more active in group chats. While this can be part of enjoying the break, it can also mean that routines and boundaries have gradually slipped. As we get into the new term, it's a good opportunity to reset your family's expectations around technology so that devices support learning, sleep and wellbeing rather than becoming a distraction. Consider revisiting expectations around:

- when phones are put away, particularly during homework, family time and before bed
- screen time during the school week, ensuring there's a healthy balance between technology, schoolwork and other activities
- group chats and social media, including how to manage upsetting messages and the importance of leaving chats that no longer feel positive
- getting help, making sure your child knows they can always come to you or another trusted adult if something online makes them feel worried or uncomfortable.

A few simple conversations at the start of term can make it much easier to establish healthy digital habits that will support your child throughout the school year.

Supporting your child if they're feeling anxious
Remind them that:

- most students have worries, even if they don't show them
- friendships naturally change over time
- new routines usually feel easier after the first couple of weeks
- asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Online challenges: Helping your child make safe choices
Online challenges have become a regular part of many young people's online lives. While some are harmless and encourage creativity or fundraising, others can involve risky behaviour, dangerous dares or pressure to do something simply because 'everyone else is doing it.'
Social media platforms are designed to promote popular and engaging content, meaning children may see the same challenge repeatedly, making it feel normal or expected.
For teenagers especially, the desire to fit in, gain approval from friends or increase likes and views can sometimes outweigh their judgement of the risks involved.

Understanding why young people take part
Most young people don't join dangerous challenges because they want to get hurt. Instead, they may:

- want to fit in with friends
- feel pressure not to miss out
- think the risks have been exaggerated
- want attention, likes or followers
- believe 'it won't happen to me.'

Helping children understand these influences is often more effective than simply telling them not to take part.

What parents can do
The most effective protection is regular conversation rather than one big talk.
Try asking questions such as:

- "What's the latest online challenge?"
- "Why do you think people take part?"
- "How would you know if something had gone too far?"

Approaching the conversation with curiosity rather than judgement makes it much more likely your child will talk openly.

Digital safeguarding focus
Many online challenges begin with a message in a group chat or someone encouraging others to join in. Remind your child that they never have to take part in something just because friends are doing it or because they're worried about being left out.
Encourage them to:

- think about the real-world consequences before taking part
- avoid sharing dangerous challenges with others
- leave conversations that encourage risky behaviour
- tell a trusted adult if something makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

If you are concerned
If you're worried that your child has taken part in a dangerous challenge or is being pressured online, speak to them calmly and without judgement. If needed, seek support from school, our pastoral and safeguarding team are here to help.

Year 7

During the Notre Dame Retreat to Formby, centred on the theme "One Body, Many Parts," students explored how every individual has unique gifts and talents that contribute to a stronger community. Through group discussions and activities, pupils reflected on the most significant people in their lives and considered the qualities that make these individuals positive role models. Team-building activities, including Human Bingo, encouraged students to communicate with new people, build friendships, and develop confidence in unfamiliar situations. A visit to Formby Beach provided opportunities for collaboration, reflection, and appreciation of the natural world, while time spent at St Joseph's Prayer Centre allowed students to deepen their spiritual understanding and consider their place within the Notre Dame family.

The retreat promoted Notre Dame's core values of confidence through meeting and working with others, courage through stepping outside comfort zones and sharing ideas, courtesy through listening respectfully and supporting fellow students, and charity through recognising the importance of kindness, service, and inclusion.

Overall, the retreat strengthened relationships, fostered a sense of belonging, and reminded students that, like the many parts of one body, everyone has an important role to play in the school community.

Well done Year 7!

Year 7

BBC Bitesize Careers Tour Visits Notre Dame

Yesterday, students took part in the BBC Bitesize Careers Tour, an exciting and interactive careers event led by a BBC presenter. Students heard from a panel of professionals working in a variety of sectors, who shared their career journeys, experiences and advice on qualifications, work experience and employability skills.

The sessions provided valuable insight into the wide range of opportunities available to young people and gave students the chance to ask questions and learn more about different career pathways. It was an inspiring event that encouraged students to think about their future aspirations and the steps they can take to achieve them.

To find out more about the BBC Bitesize Careers Tour, visit:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdmqfdm

Notices

Our Notre Dame community will take part in 'Wear Red Day ' on Friday 16th October 2026

This is a national event where people wear red to demonstrate their support for anti-racism, challenge discrimination, and raise funds for educational work tackling racism.

By wearing something red, we can demonstrate our support for creating a community where everyone feels valued, welcomed, and able to thrive.

We encourage all pupils and staff to wear one 'red' item and take the opportunity to reflect on how we can challenge discrimination and celebrate the diversity that makes our school stronger. Together, we can make a positive difference.

Students/staff wearing a 'red item' will be asked to make a donation to charity.

We will also have a red tuck shop to raise further funds.

What is Child on Child Abuse?

Child on child abuse refers to any form of abuse, exploitation or harmful behaviour between children and young people under the age of 18.

It can take many forms, including (but not limited to):

Bullying and harassment

Including name-calling, spreading rumours, exclusion and intimidation (in person or online).

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Including inappropriate comments, sharing sexual images, unwanted touching, sexualised behaviour and online abuse.

Physical abuse

Including hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, or inappropriate use of physical force.

Online abuse

Including harmful messages, sharing of images/videos, cyberbullying, online grooming and exploitation.

Coercive and controlling behaviour

Including manipulation, pressure, threats, or forcing someone to do something they do not want to do.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Including inappropriate sexual comments, behaviour or the creation or sharing of nude or semi-nude images.

What can you do if something happens to you or are you see it happening to someone?

1. Speak to a trusted adult at home or in school.
2. Use the anonymous reporting 'Whisper'.
3. Use an online help e.g. Childline.

Opening hearts, minds and doors

I am writing because there are now just three weeks left for pupils to take part in my final my national survey, The Big Future.
Please could you support me with one final push before the survey closes in three weeks by encouraging your pupils to complete the survey here:

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigfuture/

The most effective way for schools to reach as many children as possible has been to give pupils time to complete the survey during the school day. To make this as easy as possible, I have also created a ready-to-use slide pack for schools, which you can find on my website.

The survey closes in three weeks, so I would be enormously grateful if you could help give your pupils the opportunity to take part before then.

Every response matters. I want to make sure that when I speak to Government about what children and young people want for their futures, I am able to represent the voices of children across the whole country – including those at your school.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Rachel de Souza
Children's Commissioner for England

Absence Reporting Procedures

If a pupil is unwell or requires a day off school, their Parent/Carer must contact the school before 8.30am.

lease call **0151 330 5122 and select OPTION 1**. This will direct you to our Attendance Team OR to leave a voicemail message. When leaving a voicemail message, please ensure you nclude your child's full name, the reason for their absence and how long you expect them o be absent. Our Attendance Team will access this message directly. If a student is off for 3 consecutive days a home visit will be conducted.

A medical note will be required if your child is absent for an appointment or illness.

Vhere possible appointments must be made outside of school hours. If an appointment is o be made during school hours, a copy of the appointment card must be given to student services to ensure your child receives the correct register mark. We expect your child to attend school in the hours around the appointment.

Students are responsible for remembering to leave class, break or lunch for their appointment. They must tell their head of year if they are intending to leave school that day for an appointment and show proof where possible. Students must report to student services and wait to be called once their parent arrives. Tannoys will NOT happen during teaching hours, as this disturbs the learning across the whole school.

For ease, parents can give their child a note to show their class teacher which will grant them permission to leave the lesson.

Enrichment

Notre Dame Catholic Academy
Established 1869

Enrichment Weekly Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunch	• Chess Club | Rm 90 | Upper canteen • Basketball | Yr 7	• Chess Club | Rm 90 | Upper canteen • Basketball | 1.30pm - 2.05pm | Basketball courts | Yr 8 • Arts | 1.30pm - 2.05pm | Art | All years	• Chess Club | Rm 90 | Upper canteen • Faith in action | 1.30pm | Chaplaincy room | Years 7 & 8 • Games club | Lunch | Rm 53 | Yr 7 - 11 • Basketball | 1.30pm - 2.05pm | Basketball courts | Yr 9	• Chess Club | Rm 90 | Upper canteen • Year 11 English Literature revision | 3.20pm - 4pm | Rm 66 | Yr 11 • Basketball | Yr 10 & Yr 11 | 1.30pm - 2.05pm | Basketball courts	• Chess Club | Rm 90 | Upper canteen
After School	• Darts | 3.25pm - 4.15pm • KS3 Football (Yr 7) | 3.20pm - 4pm | meet at lower canteen • Spanish GCSE Revision | 3.20pm - 4.20pm | Rm 79	• KS3 Football (Yr 8) | 3.20pm - 4pm | meet at lower canteen • Careers club | 3.20pm | Rm 33 • Badminton | 3.20pm - 4.15pm | Sports hall | All years • Netball | 3.20pm - 4.15pm | Sports hall | All years		• Art | 3.15pm - 4.15pm | Art | All years	

Admissions Consultation

We invite Parents and Carers to review proposed updates to our Admissions Policy for 2026-2027. You can view this on our website with full details of how you can provide feedback.

https://notredameliverpool.com/admissions/year-7-admissions/

Notre Dame Alumni Assemble!

We are reaching out to former Notre Dame students to get in touch! We want to hear from you, where you are now, what you're up to to inspire our current student body and show them where their education can lead! We are asking parents and carers to reach out - you may be a former Notre Dame student yourself, have older children who studied with us or know friends or family members who once studied with us.

Sixth Form Student Bursary

The Sixth Form Bursary is available to all students who are entitled to Free School Meals, who live independently from their family or whose household income is under £30,000. Proof of income needs to provided to Miss Nicol or Mrs Garvey.

The bursary can provide materials and equipment to help students in their studies.

Requests for Sixth Form Bursary can begin on Monday 28th September.

Full list of INSET Days:

- INSET 1: Tuesday 1st September
- INSET 2: Wednesday 2nd September
- INSET 3: Friday 25th September (Trust)
- INSET 4: Friday 27th November
- INSET 5: Monday 4th January
- INSET 6: Monday 22nd February (Trust)
- INSET 7: Friday 2nd July (Trust)

NSET 8: Monday 19th July

NSET 9: Tuesday 20th July

- INSET: Friday 25th September
- **Half term: Monday 26th – Friday 30th October**
- Students return on Monday 2nd November
- INSET: Friday 27th November
- **End of Term: Friday 18th December**
- Christmas break: Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January

OUR FULL LIST OF TERM DATES, INCLUDING INSET DAYS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE HERE.

Parent Code of Conduct

Please take time to familiarise yourselves with our parental code of conduct which can be found here

SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

If you feel a child is at risk (suffering harm, neglect or abuse) Any member of the public can contact Careline on 0151 233 3700 or Merseyside Police on 0151 709 6010

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

If you currently need support for your mental health or well being these are some of the organisations who are happy to listen and help:

Anxiety UK
03444775774 (Helpline)
075374160905 (Text)

Childline
0800 1111 (Free 24 hr helpline)

Papyrus Hotline (Under 35s at risk of suicide or concerned for another)
0800 068 4141 07786209697 (text)

The Mix (Support & Advice for under 25s)
0808 068 4994 85258 (Text THEMIX)

Young Minds
0808 803 5544 (Parent helpline)
85258 (Free 24hr crisis messenger, text YM)

Young Stonewall Information & support for young people who identify as LGBTQ
0800 050 2020

Samaritans Support for anyone who needs to talk
116 123 (Call)

Bullybusters
0800 169 6928
Please refer to the school website for further contact

REPORTING AN ISSUE ON SOCIAL MEDIA – A GUIDE

Visit this guide here.

https://ypas.org.uk/services/whats-on-calendar/

DOMESTIC ABUSE/VIOLENCE

Please remember, in an emergency dial 999 for immediate assistance. You can call 999 without speaking then pressing 55, or tapping or coughing into the phone. This will enable police to respond Women's Aid 0808 2000 247 (24 hr helpline) Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327 Worst Kept Secret Helpline Merseyside

The Safeguarding Team

Headteacher: Mrs V Taylor

Deputy Headteacher
Mrs E Brennan & Mrs K Thomas

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs E Brennan

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
Miss S Styles
Mrs K Hawke

PC H Davies – School Safer Police Officer
Mrs J Willliams – Special Educational Needs
Mrs S McKay – Assistant Office Manager
Head and Assistant Heads of Year

www.notredameliverpool.com/safeguarding/

Notre Dame Catholic Academy
Established 1869

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Charity, Courtesy, Confidence, Courage